

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

FELLOWSHIP CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE GEORGIA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 8, 2015) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Emma Grace Hurley of Fellowship Christian School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hurley is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Fellowship Christian School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the racecourse, distinguishes Hurley as Georgia's best high school girls cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Hurley joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-00, 2000-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-1 junior won the Class A private schools individual state championship with a time of 19:06.78 this past season. Also a two-time Team Georgia selection as named by the Atlanta Track Club, Hurley took seventh at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 17:15, then captured 24th place at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 18:28. She finished unbeaten against Georgia prep competitors this past season.

Hurley has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society, she has volunteered on behalf of her church and as part of her school's GO Service Program, donating more than 100 hours to multiple charitable campaigns, including Operation Christmas Child, Wiphan Care Ministries and Feel Beautiful Today's efforts to provide hope for women and girls affected by cancer. She has also served as a student ambassador for FCS.

"She is a natural athlete and a serious competitor whose athletic excellence speaks for itself, but it is her character that has always impressed me most," said Susan Reilly, head coach of rival Mount Pisgah Christian School. "Her sportsmanship towards her opponents and her teammates is positive and encouraging. She has great respect for the sport of cross country and does not flaunt her talent or use it for personal gain. She wins with grace."

Hurley will begin her senior year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Hurley joins Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Kathryn Foreman (2013-14, Landmark Christian School), Allie Buchalski (2012-13, Johns Creek High School), Grace Tinkey (2011-12 & 2010-11, First Presbyterian Day School), Nicky Akande (2009-10, Collins Hill), Amanda Winslow (2008-09, Collins Hill), and Emily Reese (2007-08, Chamblee) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit www.gatorade.com/poy.

###